PHOTOVOICE

Photovoice is a powerful approach to identify community concerns, address health disparities and encourage social change. It visually chronicles the lives of residents to gain a deeper understanding of community perspectives. Our Photovoice guidance materials serve as a supplemental resource for individuals who are integrating Photovoice as a stakeholder engagement method for their HIA. See additional resources for more information on conducting a Photovoice project.

What is Photovoice?

Photovoice is a process by which people use photography to identify, represent, and enhance their community. It allows members in the community to reflect on and visually communicate about their experiences and their environment. By creating a dialogue of the community's strengths and concerns, this tool can be used to advocate for change and inspire social action. The power of Photovoice repositions the participants from researchers to catalysts for change.

What are the benefits of integrating Photovoice with an HIA?

Photovoice is an active participatory method to engage the community and receive their input on potential health impacts of the plan, project or proposal. Not only does it capture individuals' personal stories but also visually communicates the health impacts on the community firsthand. Photovoice also raises the awareness and understanding of health among the participants, community, and stakeholders so they can better influence policy and social change. Collaborating with the community and cross-sector stakeholders strengthens the communication channel and builds community relationships. Additionally, Photovoice is a valuable data collection tool that obtains rich and substantial ground-truthing data. It also advances health equity by investing in marginalized populations and giving them a voice.

HCPH and Community Young Leaders Photovoice

The Community Young Leaders Photovoice project was intended to help share high school students' vision for their community, help understand baseline community characteristics and their impacts on health outcomes, and to identify the youth's perceptions of their community and create opportunities to advocate change.

HCPH conducted the Community Young Leaders Photovoice project over a three-week period. This project was performed in partnership with a community after-school program, Neighborhood Centers, Inc. The team conducted two-hour focus group sessions, which occurred on Mondays and Thursdays after school with about seven to ten students. The Houston Center for Photography provided a basic photography training workshop for the youths. The workshop introduced basic photography techniques such as how to use a camera or smartphone, the importance of image composition and lighting. Previous photography experience was not required for the workshop.

The students were asked to take photos of "what makes it difficult to be healthy and what makes it easy to be healthy." Based on the photos taken, the students were motivated to develop hashtags relating to their respective themes. After theme development, students created captions for their pictures and posted them on the Harris County Public Health Tumblr blog. Students used the SHOWED method to help stimulate their creativity and generate ideas for caption writing. The approach asks the questions: What do you **See** here? What is **Happening** here? How does this relate to **Our** lives? **Why** does this issue exist? How can this image **Educate** people? and What can we **Do** about it?[1] This approach helped the students to communicate their lived experience through captivating statements.

Each caption posted on Tumblr included a minimum of two hashtags for each blog entry. Using hashtags can be an efficient and powerful approach for optimizing social engagement and enabling users to search through content or topics with ease. The hashtags developed during the focus group sessions assisted with identifying and codifying the themes. The majority of the students were familiar with Tumblr; however, they received training on how to use Tumblr. The youths were given two options: post their images using a computer provided by the Photovoice team or download the Tumblr application using their smartphones. Several students preferred the latter of the two options. Also, most students opted to use their current accounts to post their photos, and first-time users created a new account.

Lessons Learned

Tip #1: Developing Collaborative Partnerships: Harris County Public Health Photovoice team collaborated with Neighborhood Centers Inc., a community-based organization, to recruit youth participants who were interested in participating in the Photovoice project. Plan early to identify opportunities to partner and recruit participants from community agencies.

Tip #2: Communication is Key: Developing goals and objectives with all stakeholders builds a strong sense of community and responsibility to work toward a common purpose. Regularly clarify and communicate the project goals with participants. Communicating project goals will help keep the participants aware of the purpose of the project.

Tip #3: Creating Dialogue around the Photos: Youth participants may need more time selecting and contextualizing their photos. Creating dialogue about their photos during each Photovoice session is crucial to the success of the project. Explain the SHOWED method in greater detail to help them understand and define their photos.

Tip #4: Capturing Photos: Youth participants tend to capture unrelated photos such as taking pictures of their friends, or other neighboring communities. Remind and motivate the participants at the end of every session to capture at least three to five related photos. Plan a tour of the geographical boundaries you are wanting to capture or have students make a map.

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[1] Adapted from: Wang, C., and M. A. Burris. "Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment." Health Education & Behavior 24.3 (1997): 369-87.

Photovoice Materials Checklist

Below is a Photovoice checklist to help prepare for focus groups and individual interviews.

- ☐ Consent/Photo release forms
- ☐ Committed space for Photovoice sessions/meetings
- ☐ Smartphones, Digital or Disposable Cameras
- ☐ PowerPoint for each Photovoice session
- ☐ Handouts
- ☐ Pens or pencils
- ☐ Folders
- ☐ Poster Board
- ☐ Easel
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Sticky notes
- ☐ Poster or foam board

If participants are using smartphones:

Computer – Participants can transfer photos from their smartphones to the computer to free up space on their phones and save on the computer for future viewing. Participants can connect their smartphones using a USB cable. Using smartphones makes it easy to upload and share photos through various social media channels, blogs, and digital newsletters to name a few.

Printer – It is best practice to print the participant's photos. Facilitators should motivate each participant to choose their top 3-5 photos during each Photovoice session. Photos printed can help the participants contextualize their photos and be used for exhibitions; depending the project dissemination plan.

If participants are using digital cameras:

Computer – Participants can connect their digital camera using a USB cable or memory card to save their photos to the computer. Using digital cameras makes it easy to upload and share photos through various social media channels, blogs, and digital newsletters to name a few.

Printer – It is best practice to print the participant's photos. Facilitators should motivate each participant to choose their top 3-5 photos during each Photovoice session. Photos printed can help the participants contextualize their photos and be used for exhibitions; depending the project dissemination plan.

If participants are using disposable cameras:

Using disposable cameras is the most cost viable option but will take extra time and money to process photos in between each Photovoice session. If you decide to use disposable cameras, keep in mind that the picture resolution and quality will be low.

Additional Materials

- Photovoice Materials Checklist
- SHOWED Worksheet Handout
- Example Agendas
- Photovoice Safety Communication Flyer (PDF)
- Captions and Data Communication Flyer (PDF)

Additional Resources

- Community Tool Box, *Implementing Photovoice in Your Community*: http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/photovoice/main
- Michigan State University, System exChange, *Photovoice*: http://systemexchange.msu.edu/services/participatory-methods/photovoice

SHOWED Worksheet

Name: _____ **Title of Photo: _____**

S	What is **Seen** here? (Describe what you see)
H	What is really **Happening**? (The unseen story behind the image)
O	How does this relate to **Our** lives?
W	**Why** are things this way?
E	How could this image **Educate** people?
D	What can I **Do** about it? (Recommendations)

Caption/Hashtags:

_____

_____

_____

Wang, C., and M. A. Burris. "Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment." Health Education & Behavior 24.3 (1997): 369-87.

PHOTOVOICE AGENDA

Session 1 Objectives
1) **To introduce the community youth leaders to the Photovoice process and purpose**
2) **To provide the community youth leaders basic training on camera use, ethics, and safety**
3) **To understand the attitudes relating to health and built environment**

Session 1 Activities	Time	Instructions
Welcome/ Introductions	10-15 minutes	-Quick round-robin introductions with the participants: Name Grade What is a unique or interesting fact about yourself?
Icebreaker	5-10 minutes	-Icebreakers encourage participation and team development
Power of Photography	5-10 minutes	-Display powerful images and create dialogue around the images
What is Photovoice?	15-20 minutes	-Discuss the goals of the Photovoice project, the participant's role, and the process of Photovoice
Ground Rules	5-10 minutes	- Develop ground rules together with participants - On the white board or a large sticky note -Keep in mind: No pictures of illicit drugs or illegal activities, nothing that you would not share with your teachers and school leaders, have fun, there is no such thing as a bad photo - Discuss and review the consent forms
Presentation: What is Public Health?	15-20 minutes	- What is public health? - Why is public health important? - How does public health impact my community?
Health Tree Exercise	10-15 minutes	- Use this framework to collect ideas from the participants. - Discuss health effects and the social determinants to those effects

Brain break	5 minutes	
Field Work Overview	15-20 minutes	- Hand out folders -Review folder contents: Photovoice safety and ethics, photography 101, photo consent form, project/assignment due dates -Give instructions on what the students can take photos of (public/private property) - Revisit ground rules
Wrap-up	10-15 minutes	**Next Session:** -What is helping you to grow up healthy? -What makes it difficult to be healthy?

Houston Center for Photography Workshop		
Session 2 Activities	**Time**	**Instructions**
Photography 101	1 hour	-Students will learn and understand the fundamentals of composition, lighting, exposure, focus controls, reflections, and shadows. - Discuss how to tell your story using captivating narratives or captions - How to create memorable moments using your smartphone or digital camera. - Creative Photography: learn how to take pictures from different perspectives and angles.
Practice Skills Outside	40 minutes	- Students will practice what they learned in the workshop with experts
How to Submit Photos	20 minutes	- Discuss how to submit photos using a digital camera or smartphone.

Session 3 Objectives

1) To identify the issues and themes that emerge
2) To select photos that reflect community concerns and strengths
3) To tell stories about what the photographs mean

Session 3 Activities	Time	Instructions
Review	5-10 minutes	-Revisit ground rules and goals
Pair Up / What's Up	10-20 minutes	-**Photovoice Field Experience**: Any challenges or concerns about first picture taking experiences? Were there any surprises? -**Question:** What does health mean to you? Choose a partner and discuss what health means Share what your partner's definition of health
Collecting Photos	10-15 minutes	-Picture uploading, emailing: get all camera photos uploaded, have students email photos **Question:** What is a healthy neighborhood?
Selection of Photos	20-25 minutes	-Review photo assignments -Students sort their photos -Select 2-3 photos representing each question -What is helping you to grow up healthy? -What makes it difficult to be healthy?
SHOWeD Method	15-20 minutes	-Review SHOWED Method as a large group -Encourage each participant to fill out their SHOWED handout for each photo taken -Students share and discuss their photos
Tumblr	10-15 minutes	-Go through examples of posting photos to Tumblr
Wrap-up	10-15 minutes	-Students expressed their need for more time to take more photos and conceptualize their photos. **Week 1 Field Assignment** 1) What is helping you to grow up healthy? 2) What is holding you back?

	Session 4 Objectives

Session 4 Objectives

1) To identify the issues and themes that emerge
2) To select photos that reflect community concerns and strengths
3) To tell stories about what the photographs mean

Session 4 Activities	Time	Instructions
Welcome	10-15 minutes	-Sign-in and discuss roadmap/agenda
Pair Up / What's Up	10-20 minutes	-**Review:** Challenges and concerns about first picture taking experiences? -Were there any surprises? -Review Definition of a Healthy Neighborhood
Collecting Photos	10-15 minutes	-Picture uploading, emailing, distribution: get all camera photos uploaded, students that used their smartphones to capture photos should email their photos.
Selection of Photos	20-25 minutes	-Students sort their photos 1) What is helping you to grow up healthy? 2) What is holding you back?
SHOWeD Method	15-20 minutes	-Review SHOWED method and how it helps us think through photos -Students who are ready can begin the SHOWED worksheets for each picture they choose. -Encourage the students to share their photos with the group. -Why did you choose this photo? What about this photo do you like? Tell us something about the photo that can't be seen in the photo.

Focus Group/Theme Development	30-35 minutes	-What is helping you grow up healthy? -What is holding you back from being the healthiest you can be? -Each student writes on green sticky notes what they have observed is helping them to grow up healthy; orange sticky notes what they have observed is making it harder - Facilitator reviews sticky notes, and as a group, we agree and sort the themes -The themes developed during the focus group will be used as hashtags for Tumblr -Encourage students to develop hashtags relating to their photos
Captions	20-30 minutes	-Caption writing! -Post on HCPH Tumblr page -**Reminder:** The students can use hashtags generated during the focus group sessions. Encourage the students to develop new hashtags relating to their photos as well.
Wrap-up	10-15 minutes	-Discuss next assignment! **Week 2 Field Assignment** -**Mobility/Connectivity:** How do you get around your community? What makes it easy? What makes it difficult?

Session 5 Objectives

1) **To identify the issues and themes that emerge**
2) **To select photos that reflect community concerns and strengths**
3) **To tell stories about what the photographs mean**

Session 5 Activities	Time	Instructions
Review	5-10 minutes	-Revisit ground rules and goals
Pair Up / What's Up	5-10 minutes	-**Photovoice Field Experience**: Any challenges or concerns about first picture taking experiences? -Were there any surprises?
Collecting Photos	10-15 minutes	-Picture uploading, emailing: get all camera photos uploaded, have students email photos
Selection of Photos	20-25 minutes	-Students sort their photos -Select 2-3 photos to represent each question -**Mobility/Connectivity**: How do you get around your community? What makes it easy? What makes it difficult?
Review SHOWeD Method	15-20 minutes	-Review SHOWED Method as a large group -Encourage each participant to fill out their SHOWED handout for each photo taken. -Students should share and discuss their photos
Focus Group/Theme Development	30-35 minutes	-**Mobility/Connectivity:** How do you get around your community? What makes it easy? What makes it difficult? -Each student writes on green sticky notes what they have observed is helping them to grow up healthy; orange sticky notes what they have observed is making it harder

		-Facilitator reviews sticky notes, and as a group, we agree and sort the themes.
		-Each student writes on green sticky notes what they have observed is helping them to grow up healthy; orange sticky notes what they have observed is making it harder
		-Facilitator reviews sticky notes, and together we group them / agree with them.
		-The themes developed during the focus group will be used as hashtags for Tumblr
		- Encourage students to develop hashtags relating to their photos
Captions	20-30 minutes	-Caption writing! -Post on HCPH Tumblr page **Reminder:** The students can use hashtags generated during the focus group sessions. Encourage the students to develop new hashtags relating to their photos as well.
Wrap-up	10-15 minutes	-Thank the students for their time and discuss details of the celebration party.

Individual Interviews		
Session 6 Activities	**Time**	**Instructions**
Individual Interviews	2 hours (depending on the size of group)	-Conduct one-on-one follow-up interviews.